

REASONS FOR ALLOWANCE

1. The following is an examiner's statement of reasons for allowance: the prior art of record does not teach or suggest a method of drilling, comprising a) circulating through a drill bit a fluid, said fluid including a viscosified fluid; a fluid-loss control additive; and a bridging agent that is a degradable material comprising an orthoester or a polyorthoester, b) forming a self-degrading filter cake containing the bridging agent, and c) permitting said filter cake to self-degrade.
2. The closest prior art is USPN 5,783,527 to Dobson et al., hereinafter "Dobson'527". Dobson'527 discloses an alkaline water-based well fluid that deposits an easily degradable/removable filter cake on the sides of a borehole during a drilling operation, wherein the fluid contains one or more polysaccharide polymers, sized bridging particles, and a peroxide selected from alkaline earth metal peroxides, zinc peroxide, and mixtures thereof. However, Dobson'527 does not teach or suggest the drilling process forming a self-degrading filter cake including a bridging agent containing orthoester or polyorthoester.
3. The obviousness-type double patenting rejection over claims 16-22, 27 and 29-34 of USPN 7,475,728 B2 to Pauls, hereinafter 'Pauls'728, has been withdrawn. The method recited in independent claims 16 and 30 of Pauls'728 requires the presence of a filter cake that is formed in the wellbore *prior* to the addition to the wellbore of the recited orthoester/polyorthoester fluid composition to degrade the filter cake, which is

patentably distinct from the present claims that recite forming a *self-degrading* filter cake comprising orthoester/polyorthoester material as a component of the filter cake (prior to degradation of the filter cake).

4. Any comments considered necessary by Applicant must be submitted no later than the payment of the issue fee and, to avoid processing delays, should preferably accompany the issue fee. Such submissions should be clearly labeled "Comments on Statement of Reasons for Allowance."

Information Disclosure Statement

5. The information disclosure statement filed August 30,2010 fails to comply with 37 CFR 1.98(a)(1), which requires the following: (1) **a list of all patents, publications, applications, or other information submitted for consideration by the Office;** (2) U.S. patents and U.S. patent application publications listed in a section separately from citations of other documents; (3) the application number of the application in which the information disclosure statement is being submitted on each page of the list; (4) a column that provides a blank space next to each document to be considered, for the examiner's initials; and (5) a heading that clearly indicates that the list is an information disclosure statement.

The information disclosure statement has been placed in the application file, but the information referred to therein has not been considered.

Conclusion

6. Any inquiry concerning this communication or earlier communications from the examiner should be directed to JOHN J. FIGUEROA whose telephone number is (571)272-8916. The examiner can normally be reached on Monday-Thursday 8:00-6:00pm.

If attempts to reach the examiner by telephone are unsuccessful, the examiner's supervisor, James Seidleck can be reached on (571) 272-1078. The fax phone number for the organization where this application or proceeding is assigned is 571-273-8300.

Information regarding the status of an application may be obtained from the Patent Application Information Retrieval (PAIR) system. Status information for published applications may be obtained from either Private PAIR or Public PAIR. Status information for unpublished applications is available through Private PAIR only. For more information about the PAIR system, see <http://pair-direct.uspto.gov>. Should you have questions on access to the Private PAIR system, contact the Electronic Business Center (EBC) at 866-217-9197 (toll-free). If you would like assistance from a USPTO Customer Service Representative or access to the automated information system, call 800-786-9199 (IN USA OR CANADA) or 571-272-1000.

/John J. Figueroa /
Examiner, Art Unit 1796

JJF/JJS